

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES 491**  
**DISEASE AND CULTURE**  
**FALL 2002**  
**TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, 1:25 – 2:40 P.M.**

*Instructor:* Prof. Elizabeth Toon  
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Thurs 12 noon – 1,  
and by appointment

**DESCRIPTION:**

Influenza and Ebola, syphilis and AIDS, breast cancer and heart disease--whether rare or pervasive, disease frightens and threatens us, shaping our identities and our interactions with others. In this seminar, we will look at how scholars and others have written about disease, and we will begin to explore our own ideas about illness, contagion, risk, danger, and death. Course materials include historical and social scientific studies of medical knowledge and the experience of illness. We will conclude the course by examining and critiquing contemporary representations of disease and illness.

**COURSE MEETINGS:**

Each class meeting will be a seminar-style discussion, with an occasional background mini-lecture from the instructor.

**MATERIALS**

Books required for the course are available at the Campus Store and are on 2-hour reserve at Uris Library:

- Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and The Collision of Two Cultures (Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1997)
- Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory (Princeton University Press, 1995)
- Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (Touchstone Books, 1986 [orig. publ. 1963])
- Audre Lorde, The Cancer Journals, Special Edition (Aunt Lute Press, 1997 [orig. publ. 1980])
- Paul Farmer, Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues, Updated Edition (University of California Press, 2001)
- Alice Wexler, Mapping Fate: A Memoir of Family, Risk, and Genetic Research (Univ. of California Press, 1995)

Other readings, marked [ECR] on the Course Schedule, are available through Uris Library's electronic course reserve.

**EVALUATION AND COURSE POLICIES:**

Your course grade will be based on the following components:

- four medium-length (1250 – 1500 word) essays (15% each) ..... 60%

- one shorter (1000 word) essay (10%) ..... 10%
- one "show-and-tell" presentation (5%) ..... 5%
- participation ..... 20%

**Papers:** Over the course of the semester, you must write and turn in at least 5 of the 6 papers scheduled, as follows:

-- Everyone writes Papers 1, 3, 4, and 6. Each of these papers will be a 1250 – 1500 word essay (not research papers) in response to a question about the readings and discussions from that section of the course. For example, Paper 1 will deal with the issues raised by the readings (Fadiman, Balshem, Kleinman) from section I of the course.

-- You choose whether you will write Paper 2 or Paper 5. These two papers are a bit shorter (1000 words) but are, again, essays (not research papers) in response to a question about the readings and discussions from that section of the course. If you choose to turn in both Paper 2 and Paper 5, I will drop the lower of the two grades.

I will hand out the assignments for each paper at least 10 days before the due date. All papers are due to me by 4 p.m. on the day scheduled, and should be turned in to my mailbox in 630 Clark Hall. **Do not email papers to me unless you have my express permission to do so.**

**"Show-and-tell":** once during the semester you should bring an item that is relevant to that day's readings and give a very brief (5 min. maximum) presentation on it at the beginning of our class meeting. The item could be a newspaper clipping or magazine story, an advertisement, a photograph, another book, a reference to a website, a piece of music, an artwork... or some other piece of material culture (we'll talk more about this). You must email or call me before that class meeting and let me know you'll be bringing in an item.

**Participation and attendance:** Participation is a vital element of this seminar, and as such, twenty percent of your course grade will be based on your participation in course discussions. I expect all of you to participate actively, and when I assess your participation grade for the course I will consider both quality and quantity. While I will not formally keep track of attendance, missing several classes will by necessity detract from your overall participation in course discussions, and thus your participation grade, and thus your course grade.

**Absences:** If you must miss a paper deadline because of illness, family emergency, or religious observance, contact me by email or voice mail **as soon as possible – within 24 hours at the latest** – to make arrangements to make up the missed work.

**Academic integrity:** I expect every student in this course to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. While it is appropriate for you to discuss assignments with each other, all work submitted by you must be your own work, done for this course (and not for previous or other courses) unless you have my permission to modify or extend other work. There are no collaborative projects in this course. If in your papers and presentations you quote from published materials or materials created by someone else, you must cite it appropriately and thoroughly. (If you have any questions about attribution, quoting, and citing, please speak to me; we will also cover this issue in class.) If any of your work violates the Code of Academic Integrity, I reserve the right to give you a zero (not an F, but no points at all) for that assignment and, if necessary, to pursue further action through the University.

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

*Thursday, August 29 -- Course introduction*

### **Section I: Defining Disease, Defining Culture**

*Tuesday, September 3*

Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and The Collision of Two Cultures (Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1997), Preface (pp. ix-xi), Note on Hmong Orthography, Pronunciation, and Quotations (pp. 289 – 290), and Chs. 1 – 8 (pp. 3 – 92)

*Thursday, September 5*

Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You (1997), Chs. 9 – 12 (pp. 93 – 170)

*Tuesday September 10*

Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You (1997), Chs. 13 – 19 (pp. 171 – 288)

*Thursday, September 12*

Martha Balshem, "Cancer, control, and causality: Talking about cancer in a working-class community," *American Ethnologist* 18 (1991) pp. 152-171 [ECR]

Arthur Kleinman, "What is specific to biomedicine?" pp. 21 – 40 in his Writing at the Margin: Discourse between Anthropology and Medicine (University of California Press, 1995) [ECR]

### **Section II: Disease as Deviance and Disorder**

*Tuesday, September 17*

Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (Prentice Hall, 1963), Chs. 1 and 2 (pp. 1 – 104)

*Thursday, September 19*

Goffman, Stigma (1963), Chs. 3, 4, and 5 (pp. 105 - 147)

*Friday, September 20 – Paper 1 due*

*Tuesday, September 24*

Michel Foucault, excerpts (pp. 241 – 269) from Ch. 9, "The Birth of the Asylum," of his Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, trans. Richard Howard (Vintage, 1988; orig. publ. 1961, 1965) [ECR]

*Thursday, September 26*

Jennifer Terry, "Anxious slippages between 'us' and 'them': A brief history of the scientific search for homosexual bodies," pp. 129-169 in Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds., Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture (Indiana University Press, 1995) [ECR]

**Section III: Disease as Sociocultural Construction**

*Tuesday, October 1*

Charles E. Rosenberg, "The tyranny of diagnosis: Specific entities and individual experience," *Milbank Quarterly* 80 (2002): 237 - 260

*Thursday, October 3*

Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory (Princeton University Press, 1998), Introduction and Chs. 1 – 5 (pp. 3 – 80)

*Monday, October 7 – Paper 2 due*

*Tuesday, October 8*

Hacking, Rewriting the Soul (1998), Chs. 6 – 12, pp. 81 - 182

*Thursday, October 10*

Hacking, Rewriting the Soul (1998), Chs. 13 - 18, pp. 183 – 268

*Tuesday, October 15: NO CLASS – FALL BREAK*

*Thursday, October 17*

Gerald M. Oppenheimer, "In the eye of the storm: The epidemiological construction of AIDS," pp. 267-300 in Elizabeth Fee and Daniel M. Fox, eds., AIDS: The Burdens of History (University of California Press, 1988) [ECR]

Paula Treichler, "Beyond Cosmo: AIDS, identity, and inscriptions of gender," pp. 235 – 277 in her How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS (Duke University Press, 1999)

**Section IV: The Illness Experience**

*Tuesday, October 22*

Kathy Charmaz, "Immersion in illness," Chapter 4 (pp. 73-104) in her Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time (Rutgers University Press, 1991) [ECR]

Rayna Rapp, "Extra chromosomes and blue tulips: Medico-familial interpretations," pp. 184 – 208 in Margaret Lock, Allan Young, and Alberto Cambrosio, eds., Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies (Cambridge University Press, 2000) [ECR]

*Wednesday, October 23 – Paper 3 due*

*Thursday, October 24*

Daniel J. Wilson, "A crippling fear: Experiencing polio in the era of FDR," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 72 (1998): 464-495 [ECR]

John R. Paul, "Therapeutic methods: The iron lung" and "Therapeutic methods: Sister Kenny's orthopedic ideas," Chapters 31 and 32 (pp. 324-345) of his A History of Poliomyelitis (Yale University Press, 1971) [ECR]

Kathryn Black, "Waiting," Chapter 3 (pp. 49-79) in her In the Shadow of Polio: A Personal and Social History (Addison-Wesley, 1996) [ECR]

*Tuesday, October 29*

Audre Lorde, The Cancer Journals, Special Edition (Aunt Lute Press, 1997 [orig. publ. 1980])

*Thursday, October 31*

Robert A. Aronowitz, "Do not delay: Breast cancer and time, 1900 – 1970," *Milbank Quarterly* 79 (2001): 355-386

Leslie Reagan, "Engendering the dread disease: Women, men, and cancer," *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (1997): 1779 - 1787

### **Section V: Social Epidemiology**

*Tuesday, November 5*

Paul Farmer, Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues, Updated Edition (University of California Press, 2001; orig. publ. 1999), Chs. 1, 2, and 3

*Thursday, November 7*

Farmer, Infections and Inequalities, Chs. 4 and 5

*Friday, November 8 – Paper 4 due*

*Tuesday, November 12*

Farmer, Infections and Inequalities, Interlude and Chs. 6, 7, and 8

*Thursday, November 14*

Farmer, Infections and Inequalities, Chs. 9 and 10

### **Section VI: Biology and Destiny? Heredity, Risk, and Disease**

*Tuesday, November 19*

Alice Wexler, Mapping Fate: A Memoir of Family, Risk, and Genetic Research (Univ. of California Press, 1995), Introduction and Chs. 1-5 (pp. xi – xxv, 1 - 102)

*Thursday, November 21*

Wexler, Mapping Fate (1995), Chs. 6 - 9 (pp. 103 – 181)

*Friday, November 22 – Paper 5 due*

*Tuesday, November 26*

Wexler, Mapping Fate (1995), Chs. 10 – 14 and Afterword (pp. 182-276)

*Thursday, November 28: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK*

*Tuesday, December 3*

Carlo Novas and Nikolas Rose, "Genetic risk and the birth of the somatic individual,"  
*Economy and Society* 29 (2000): 485-513

*Thursday, December 5*

Course conclusion

*Friday, December 13 – Paper 6 due*